

# **Nantucket Commission on Disability**

## **Minutes**

### **March 15, 2007**

**Present:** Mickey Rowland, Dick Moran, Phil Gallagher, Liz Winship, and Brenda McDonough  
**Absent:** Linda Williams  
**Guest:** Jon St. Laurent, Owner of Autopscot Taxi

*The meeting opened with the members reviewing February's minutes, which were unanimously approved.*

#### **Topics:**

- **Dreamland Theater:**

Mickey briefed the Commission members on the one portion of the HDC's meeting on Tuesday, March 13, 2007: the Dreamland Theater. Mickey addressed the HDC's board concerning sidewalk access to the Dreamland Theater. Initially, the HDC was in favor of retaining the eight-inch concrete step but reconsidered their position to provide access via a ramped entrance at one of the two entrance doors. Mickey argued that the proposed ramped entrance to one of the doors provides an extremely dangerous situation especially while exiting in the event of an emergency. A majority of HDC members agreed with Mickey's position and asked the Dreamland architects to revise their plans to include complete access at sidewalk level, thus eliminating the eight-inch step.

Phil asked what if anything is historic about a 1950's concrete step? Mickey replied that nothing was historical about this step.

Dick wondered how many votes were needed for HDC approval. Mickey replied that a simple majority vote is necessary for the HDC to approve or disapprove plans presented to them.

- **Ground Transportation at the Airport**

At February's meeting, Phil mentioned that he believed that airports are responsible for providing ground transportation to any disabled passengers who arrive at the airport. Mickey was wondering if I looked into this. I told the Commission that I searched the Code of Federal Regulations and could not find anything relating to this topic. However, I will contact the Massachusetts Office on Disability to check on the status of ground transportation at airports.

- **Accessible Touring/Charter Vehicle**

1. Jon St. Laurent, owner and operator of Atopscot Taxi, attended our meeting to discuss what he sees as a need for an accessible touring/charter business here on Nantucket. Mickey briefed the Commission members on the process that was followed when the Commission wanted an accessible taxi. Every applicant on the Taxi-Waiting List received an invitation to apply for the newly created accessible taxi license. They were told that this license was exclusively for a wheelchair accessible vehicle and that they would have to adhere to the specific regulations that governed this special license. If more than one applicant applied, then the applicant with the most seniority on the taxi list would be offered this license. Mickey explained that this is the same process that we would have for the accessible touring vehicle.

2. **Jon:** He explained the four transportation licenses currently available on Nantucket: taxi, charter, limousine, and touring. He mentioned that you could give tours and charters as long as you charge per hour.

**Liz:** Can you get this license as a priority for the disabled population?

**Jon:** I'm looking for an accessible tour license for a wheelchair accessible vehicle that I already own.

**Liz:** Is the vehicle equipped for more than one wheelchair?

**Jon:** The vehicle is equipped for two wheelchairs and has an hydraulic lift.

**Mickey:** We want to make sure there is not a conflict of interest in the touring business and the accessible taxi business.

**Jon:** I plan to hire three employees who will work weekends to start. As far as the taxi is concerned, I have picked up over six hundred wheelchair passengers since I began this business. I actually had ninety wheelchair fares alone in January and over sixty so far in March.

**Mickey:** Since there is a large taxi demand, can you use the tour van as a taxi?

**Jon:** I actually have the capacity to accommodate two wheelchairs at any given time in my present taxi. If I am transporting a client in a wheelchair and I receive another call for another wheelchair client, I will gladly accommodate both clients.

**Liz:** Can you only have one vehicle with your taxi license?

**Jon:** I cannot have two vehicles under on taxi license.

(Brenda then explained to everyone present the process in which we proceeded for an accessible taxi license.)

**Mickey:** What hours will this tour service operate?

**Jon:** There are no stipulations as to any specific hours that you have to operate.

**Mickey:** We may want to put some regulations in place for this touring service for the disabled public.

**Jon:** I will be happy to operate from April 15<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup> and give tours on-demand. I do not plan to park in the touring vans designated areas waiting for business. I plan to conduct tours on a reservation only policy from the hours of 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. I also want to advertise my business.

**Mickey:** Will other tour drivers refer a disabled passenger to Jon for a tour?

**Jon:** Yes.

**Mickey:** Who is your priority for these tours since you can also transport the general public?

**Jon:** My priority is the disabled community. I plan to promote my business much in the same way as I promoted my taxi business. I already have plans for attracting disabled passengers.

**Liz:** If you have employees to help you, then maybe you need two licenses.

**Jon:** I do not need an extra license.

**Mickey:** The tour license will give disabled people more options.

Phil mentioned that maybe the taxi regulations could be rewritten so that in the event of an emergency, you can transfer your taxi license and plates to another vehicle instantly.

Phil motioned to petition the selectmen to create an extra tour license for a wheelchair accessible vehicle, which Dick second and so it was voted.

- **Web Site:**

The Commission members received information that was suggested for our link to the Town's web site. The members were asked for their comments and everyone seemed to positively respond to the suggested material for our link. One comment that was made was to include the fact that Nantucket offers its own disabled parking permits. Brenda mentioned that the members are free to suggest updates to our link at any time.

- **Guide Book:**

The Commission members received a rough copy of our updated Guide at our February and our March meetings. The members were asked to review the Guide and freely comment on the contents of it. Dick suggested that the Guide be dedicated in memory of Barbara Grey. Phil commented on the fact that all the banks were wheelchair accessible except for the downtown branch of Pacific National Bank. Brenda told the Commission that four to six months ago, a sign company contacted her as to what kind of signage we thought would be appropriate and needed for the bank. They were commissioned to make the signage. Presently, no signs have been installed. Brenda told the members that Linda actually spoke with Joel Brown, President of Pacific National Bank, and that precipitated the ordering of the signs. Brenda will contact Linda to once again talk to Joel.

- **Pharmacy Parking:**

Liz stated that she believes there is a demand for accessible parking spaces at the downtown pharmacies. It is extremely difficult to navigate the sidewalks on crutches in the snow and ice. Mickey stated that the problem with accessible parking spaces on Main Street is the cobblestones. We will visit that area and see if we can come up with some creative solution for accessible parking.

- **Other:**

Brenda told the Commission that the “core” downtown area has three hundred ten parking spaces of which eight are accessible. Brenda will contact Massachusetts Office on Disability to see if there is a designated proportion of parking spaces that are suppose to be accessible.

The Commission signed a sympathy card in memory of Barbara Grey. This card will be sent to Barbara’s daughter Hilary.

Brenda McDonough, Facilitator

**Our Next Meeting will be on June 6, 2007**